

# **A brave new digital world for traditional journalism and politics**

**Understanding the effects of social network sites and citizen journalism**

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# A Brave New Digital World

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- ❖ Informational Uses of Social Network Sites and Individuals' Political Participation
  
- ❖ Citizen Journalism: How User-Generated News Use Relates to Political Participation

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- ❖ **Informational Uses of Social Network Sites and Individuals' Political Participation**
- ❖ Citizen Journalism: How User-Generated News Use Relates to Political Participation

# Theoretical Background



- ❖ Rich tradition in social science research that has traced the performance of individuals and collectives to networks of social relationships (Bourdieu, 1983; Coleman, 1990; Lin, 2001)
- ❖ Citizens' consumption of media and effects on political and civic participation as well as the foundation of trust and social capital are related
- ❖ Communication theory supports the link between news use and participation. E.g.,:
  - ❖ Information & deliberation (Putnam, 2001; Shah et al., 2001)
  - ❖ Communication mediation model (McLeod et al., 1999)

# Theoretical Background

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- ❖ Internet has opened new venues for discussion (e.g., blogs, SNS, etc)
  - ❖ Blog news use and online political participation (Gil de Zúñiga et al, 2009)
  - ❖ Blogs news use and offline political participation (Rojas & Puig-i-Abril, 2008; Gil de Zúñiga, 2009)
- ❖ Applying this rationale to SNS use, we could expect that informational uses of online social networks should be positively related to individuals' engagement.

# Hypotheses

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- ❖ H1: The more an individual uses social network sites for news, the more social capital that individual will be likely to report.
- ❖ H2: The more an individual uses social network sites for news, the more political engagement that individual will show.
- ❖ H3: The more an individual uses social network sites for news, the more civic engagement that individual will show.

# Methods



- ❖ Online survey, national sample, 12/08-1/09 ( $N = 1,159$ ; Subsample SNS = 475)
  
- ❖ DVs:
  - Social Capital (8 items  $\alpha = .94$ )
  - Civic Participation (5 items  $\alpha = .71$ )
  - Political Participation (Offline: 7 items  $\alpha = .74$ ; Online: 4 items  $\alpha = .85$ )
  
- ❖ IVs:
  - Social Network Sites use for news (3 items  $\alpha = .87$ )
  
- ❖ Control variables:
  - Socio-demographics (e.g., gender, age, education, income)
  - Political involvement variables (e.g., news use 7 items  $\alpha = .69$ ), efficacy, knowledge, party affiliation, and network size)

# Results



	<b>SNS News</b>	<b>Soc Cap</b>	<b>Online Pol Par</b>	<b>Offline Pol Par</b>	<b>Civic Part</b>
<b>SNS News</b>	---	.19***	.34***	.18***	.34**
<b>Soc Cap</b>	.23***	---	.22***	.25***	.38***
<b>Online Pol Par</b>	.37***	.22***	---	.62***	.51***
<b>Offline Pol Par</b>	.24***	.21***	.63***	---	.49***
<b>Civic Part</b>	.41***	.35***	.58***	.53***	---



# Results (Hierarchical Regressions)



	Civic Participation	Social Capital
<b>Demographics</b>		
Gender (female)	.116**	.168***
Race (white)	.09#	.045
Income	.029	.096#
Education	.101*	.016
R <sup>2</sup> change	4.2%	3.2%
<b>Antecedents</b>		
News Use	.311***	.155***
Network Size	.080*	.021
Pol. Efficacy	.250***	.215***
Knowledge	.110*	.05
Party Affiliation	.032	-.039
R <sup>2</sup> change	28.7%	11.3%
<b>Social Network Sites</b>		
News Use	.220***	.127***
R <sup>2</sup> change	3.7%	1.2%
<b>Total R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>36.6%</b>	<b>15%</b>

# Results (Hierarchical Regressions)



	Online Pol. Part.	Offline Pol. Part.
<b>Demographics</b>		
Gender (female)	.086*	.055
Race (white)	-.012	.087#
Income	.073	.042
Education	.160***	.206***
R <sup>2</sup> change	1.5%	8.2%
<b>Antecedents</b>		
News Use	.251***	.143***
Network Size	.020	.043
Pol. Efficacy	.215***	.203***
Knowledge	.057	.090*
Party Affiliation	.196***	.141**
R <sup>2</sup> change	31.4%	13.5%
<b>Social Network Sites</b>		
News Use	.216***	.136***
R <sup>2</sup> change	3.6%	1.4%
<b>Total R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>36.7%</b>	<b>23.9%</b>

# Discussion

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## ❖ So:

- ❖ Known antecedents of political participation still prevail as important predictors (political efficacy, knowledge, media use, etc)
- ❖ Social Network Sites use for news come to add to the democratic process, providing valuable information
- ❖ Future research should focus on expanding the effect of social network sites in other dimensions (i.e., discussion)

# A Brave New Digital World

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❖ Informational Uses of Social Network Sites and Individuals' Political Participation

❖ **Citizen Journalism: How User-Generated News Use Relates to Political Participation**

# Previous Research

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- ❖ Long body of literature supporting the role of traditional professional journalism, informed citizens, and civic and political participation (Hamilton, 1787; de Tocqueville, 1835)
- ❖ Some media are better than others: TV = largest audience; but newspapers = better political knowledge
- ❖ So what is the role of citizen journalism (i.e. CNN's iReport, OhMyNews, Digital Journal)?

# Defining Journalism

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## ❖ *Professional Journalism:*

Paid professionals, with training, supervisions and editing, appearing in mainstream outlets (i.e., newspapers, TV news) – offline and online combined

## ❖ *Citizen Journalism:*

Unpaid work, less/no professional training/editing, plain language, different news judgment (often hyper-local) – generally online only

# Hypotheses/RQs



- ❖ H1: There will be a positive relationship between consuming *professional journalism* content and political knowledge
- ❖ RQ1: What is the relationship between consuming *citizen journalism* content and political knowledge?
- ❖ H2: There will be a positive relationship between consuming *professional journalism* content and political participation
- ❖ RQ2: What is the relationship between consuming *citizen journalism* content and political participation?
- ❖ RQ3: Does trust moderate the association of consuming *professional* and *citizen journalism* content with political knowledge & participation?

# Methods



- ❖ Web-based panel survey
  - ❖ National data
  - ❖ Sample was matched with demographic variables of the U.S. National Census (we compared with Pew as well).
  - ❖ Valid cases 1,159 (22.8% response rate)
- ❖ Dependent Variables
  - ❖ *Political knowledge* (4 knowledge questions) (0-4, M=3.05)
  - ❖ *Offline political participation* (attended a meeting or rally, written to a public official or news, posted a sign, voted) (0-10, M=2.89)
  - ❖ *Online political participation* (wrote to a politician or news, campaign contribution, subscribed to political listserv, volunteered for a campaign, shared a political message) (6-60, M=15.02)



# Methods



## ❖ Independent Variables

- ❖ *Professional news media use* (how often do you get information about current events, public issues or politics from newspapers, TV news, both offline and online) (0-36, M=20.53)
- ❖ *Citizen news media use* (how often do you visit a site generated by regular people) (2-14, M=3.86)
- ❖ *Professional news media trust* (2-20, M=8.38)
- ❖ *Citizen news media trust* (1-10, M=3.68)

# Hypotheses/RQs

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- ❖ H1: There will be a positive relationship between consuming *professional journalism* content and political knowledge
- ❖ RQ1: What is the relationship between consuming *citizen journalism* content and political knowledge?

# Findings



	Political Knowledge	Offline Participation	Online Participation
Trust in Professional News Media	-.069*	-.112***	-.061*
Trust in Citizen News Media	.061	.158***	.208***
Professional News Media Use	.067*	.059*	.044
Citizen News Media Use	-.103**	.074*	.202***

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

# Hypotheses/RQs

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- ❖ H2: There will be a positive relationship between consuming *professional journalism* content and political participation
- ❖ RQ2: What is the relationship between consuming *citizen journalism* content and political participation?

# Findings



	Political Knowledge	Offline Participation	Online Participation
Trust in Professional News Media	-.069*	-.112***	-.061*
Trust in Citizen News Media	.061	.158***	.208***
Professional News Media Use	.067*	.059*	.044
Citizen News Media Use	-.103**	.074*	.202***

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

# Hypotheses/RQs

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- ❖ RQ3: Does trust moderate the association of consuming professional and citizen journalism content with political knowledge & participation?

# Findings



	Political Knowledge	Offline Participation	Online Participation
Trust in Professional News Media	-.069*	-.112***	-.061*
Trust in Citizen News Media	.061	.158***	.208***
Professional News Media Use	.067*	.059*	.044
Citizen News Media Use	-.103**	.074*	.202***

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

# Trust as a Moderator

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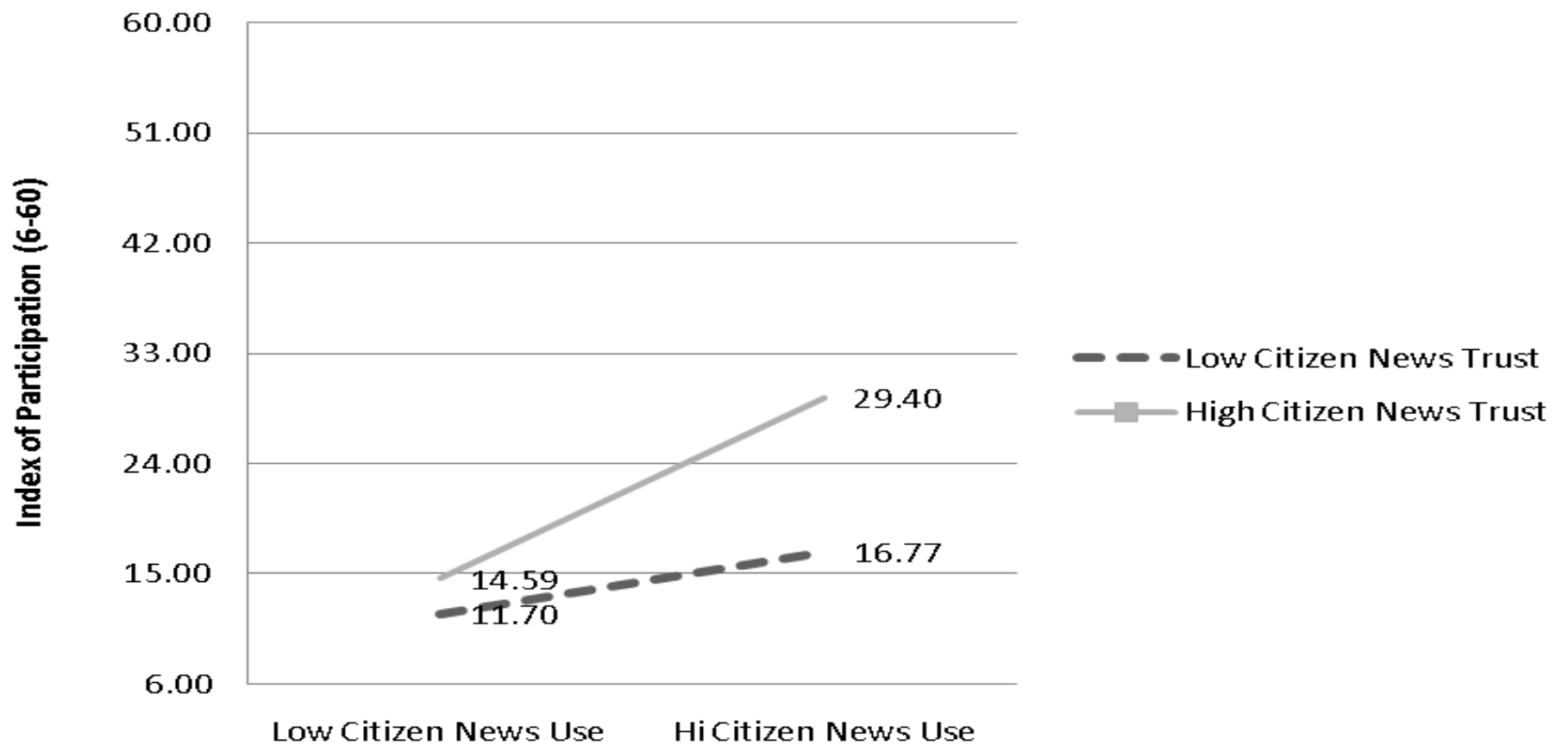
- ❖ We isolated high and low trust and high and low use of both *professional journalism* and *citizen journalism*.
- ❖ (1 S.D. above and below the mean)



# Findings



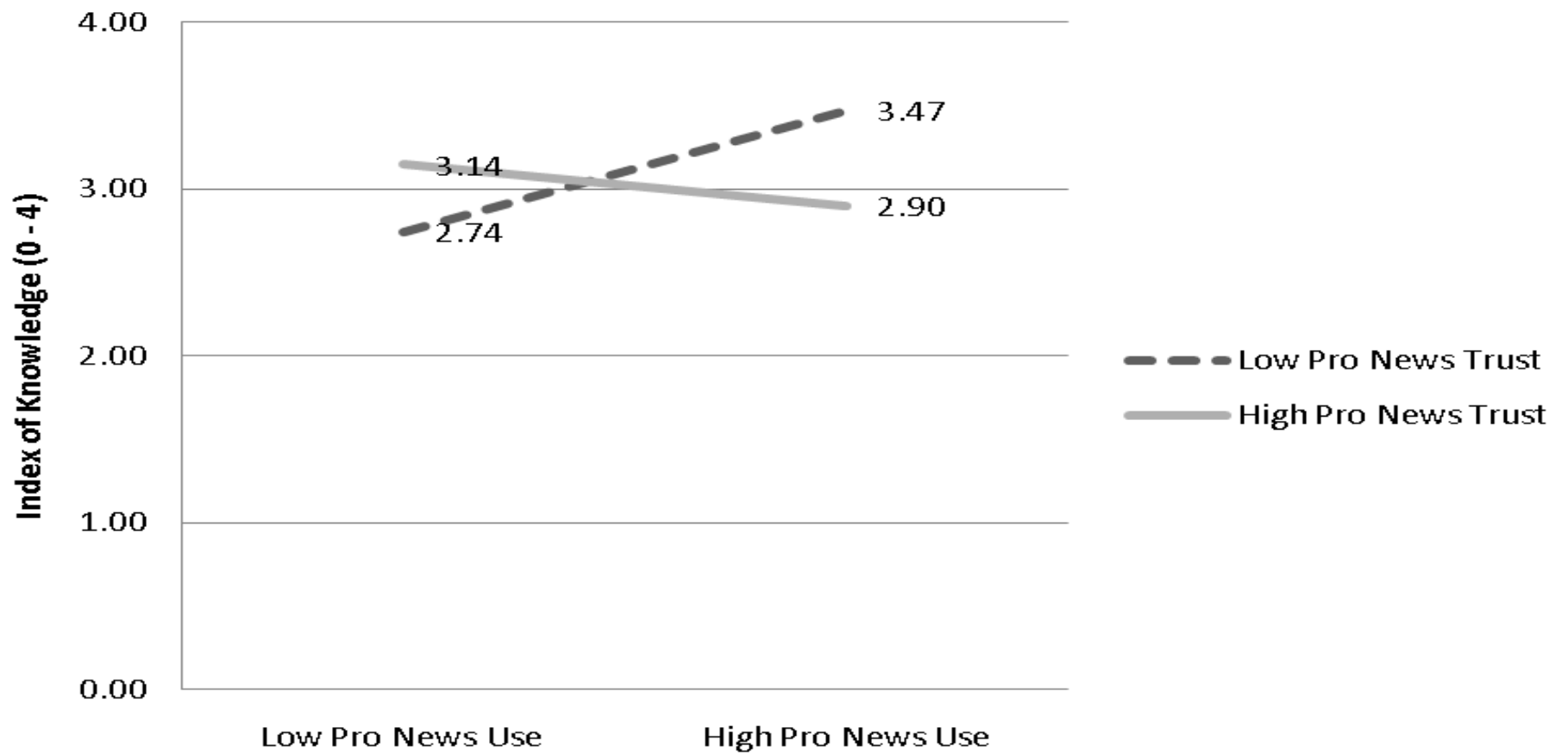
## Online Political Participation



# Findings



## Political Knowledge



# Conclusions

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- ❖ News source matters:
  - ❖ Professional news is still better for being informed
  - ❖ Professional news associated. with offline participation
  - ❖ Not trusting professional journalism seems to increase its knowledge effect
  - ❖ Citizen journalism is not associated with increased knowledge
  - ❖ Citizen journalism is associated with increased participation both offline and especially online
  - ❖ Implications for policy makers as we all learn from *a new brave digital world*

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